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WAR HISTORY

Recollections of

HON. JOHN GOODE, JR.

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF PEACE CONFERENCE IN HAMPTON ROADS, AND LAST MEETING OF GENERAL R. E. LEE AND PRESIDENT JEFFERSON DAVIS,

Delivered Before

R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, C.V.

JANUARY 10, 1902.

RICHMOND, VA.:
1902.

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C. A. Dunnington

M. P. W. 21 Oct. '09

Recollections. . .

IN compliance with the request of the R. E. Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans, I give my personal recollection as to two matters which have recently engaged, to some extent, the public attention.

First. It has been asserted that General Lee, a short time before the collapse of the Confederacy, advised the Confederate authorities that further resistance was useless, and that he recommended a cessation of hostilities upon the best terms that could be obtained. I am satisfied, from my own personal knowledge, that this is a mistake.

A few days before the final adjournment of the Confederate Congress, on the 18th of March, 1865, I received a message from President Davis through Colonel Lubbock, a member of his staff, that he desired to see me on important business at his office. I responded at once, and upon my arrival I found Mr. Davis and General Lee in consultation. After an exchange of salutations, Mr. Davis said he had sent for me to request my opinion as to the willingness of the people of Virginia to submit to further demands upon them for supplies of food and clothing, which were absolutely necessary to maintain the army in the field.

After some general conversation, in which General Lee said but little, I replied to the inquiry of the President by saying that, while I believed the people of Virginia were prepared to make still further sacrifices in support of the cause they held so dear, I preferred that the other Representatives from Virginia should be consulted, and suggested that they should be invited to the conference. This suggestion was adopted, and all the Virginia Representatives, fifteen in number, by the invitation of the President, met him, his Cabinet and General Lee in the afternoon of the same day

at four o'clock. At this meeting there was a full and free interchange of opinion, and all the Representatives concurred in saying that, in their opinion, the people of Virginia would be found ready and willing to meet any demand that might be made upon them, in the same spirit of loyalty and devotion that had characterized them since the commencement of the struggle. During the interview, General Lee explained the situation fully from a military standpoint. He referred to the length of the line he was obliged to defend, to the number of effective men, and the great scarcity of food for his soldiers and forage for his animals; but he did not say, nor did he intimate in any manner whatever, that in his opinion the cause was lost and that the time for surrender had come.

It will be remembered that, two or three weeks after the interview above referred to, he said in a note to General Grant that the time for the surrender of his army had not arrived. He was a soldier, and doubtless felt that it was not his province to volunteer advice to the political department of the Government, but to make the best fight he could with the means the Government was able to place at his disposal.

Secondly. It has been charged by some that if the Confederate authorities had exhibited real statesmanship, an arrangement might have been made by which the slave owners would have been paid for their slave property, and that such an offer was actually made by the United States authorities in the famous Hampton Roads conference. This is also, in my opinion, a great mistake.

As is well known, President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, on the morning of the 3d of February, 1865, met on board a steamer at Fortress Monroe Messrs. Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter, and John A. Campbell, who had been appointed Commissioners by President Davis. The object of the conference was to ascertain upon what terms and in what way the war could be terminated. As is well known, the conference was a failure. Upon the return of the Commissioners to Richmond, I heard two of them, Mr. Stephens and Mr. Hunter, discuss the incidents of the conference with

members of Congress at the Capitol, and they did not intimate that any proposition whatever had been made to pay the owners of slaves for their property. My recollection on this point is very clear, and it is supported by the official report signed by all three of the Commissioners, the message of President Davis, communicating that report to the Confederate Senate and House of Representatives, the message of President Lincoln to the House of Representatives of the United States when he returned to Washington, and by a published statement, made within the last few years, by Hon. John H. Reagan, of Texas, who was a member of the Confederate Cabinet. They all show conclusively, in my judgment, that the United States authorities refused to enter into negotiations with the Confederate States, or any of them separately, and that no truce or armistice would be granted without a satisfactory assurance in advance of the complete restoration of the authority of the United States. In other words, nothing would be accepted but an unconditional surrender on the part of the Confederate authorities. It is true that, in the course of the conference, the subject of slavery was discussed informally. Mr. Lincoln said that, as an individual, he would be in favor of paying a fair indemnity to the owners for the loss of their slaves, but on this subject he declared emphatically *that he could give no assurance and enter into no stipulations.*

Perhaps it may be of interest to the Camp to reproduce here the following article prepared by myself and published in the *Forum* several years ago:

Hampton Roads Conference.

One of the most interesting episodes of the war between the States was the informal conference that took place in Hampton Roads on the 3rd of February, 1865. The conference was held on board of a steamer anchored near Fortress Monroe, and the participants were President Lincoln and William H. Seward, Secretary of State of the United States, on the one hand, and Alexander H. Stephens, Robert M. T. Hunter and John A. Campbell, Commissioners appointed by President Davis, on the other. There has long been considerable misapprehension in the public mind as to the origin, objects and results of that conference. As I was a member of the Confederate Congress at that time, and had, to some extent, an inside view of the situation, I propose to give my recollection of the incident referred to.

In the beginning of the year 1865, the prospects of the Southern Confederacy were gloomy indeed. Grant with his hosts had swung around upon a new base, and was at City Point, on the James River, threatening Petersburg and Richmond, then defended by the Army of Northern Virginia under the incomparable Lee. That army during the preceding year had covered itself with imperishable glory in the Wilderness, at Spottsylvania Courthouse, and at Cold Harbor. Numbering less than sixty thousand men, it had inflicted a loss of more than fifty thousand upon the enemy in the campaign, resulting in Grant's change of base. But with inadequate supplies of food and clothing, it was then suffering all the discomforts and hardships of winter in the trenches around Petersburg and Richmond. Sheridan, in the Valley of Virginia, with a powerful and well-equipped army, had driven back Early with his little band of Confederates, and had completely devastated that beautiful and fertile region. Sherman, after destroying Atlanta and laying waste the sur-

rounding country, was at Savannah with an army of sixty-five thousand men, prepared to march through the Carolinas and form a junction with Grant in Virginia. Such was the military situation when, in the early part of January, 1865, Mr. Francis P. Blair, Sr., a gentleman of great ability and acknowledged influence with the Administration at Washington, made his appearance at Richmond. He brought with him no credentials, but exhibited to Mr. Davis the following card:

"DECEMBER 28, 1864.

"Allow the bearer, F. P. Blair, Sr., to pass our lines, go South, and return.

"(Signed) A. LINCOLN."

After a private interview with Mr. Davis, Mr. Blair returned to Washington, and in a few days came again to Richmond. Another consultation was held, in the course of which Mr. Blair suggested to Mr. Davis that a suspension of hostilities might be brought about by a secret military convention between the belligerents for the purpose of maintaining the Monroe Doctrine on this continent, and thereby preventing the threatened establishment of an empire by France in Mexico. He frankly declared that in his opinion the final result of the proposed military convention and the suspension of hostilities would be the restoration of the Union. On January 12th Mr. Davis handed to Mr. Blair the following letter:

"RICHMOND, VA., January 12, 1865.

"F. P BLAIR, ESQ:

"Sir,—I have deemed it proper and probably desirable to you to give you in this form the substance of the remarks made by me to be repeated by you to President Lincoln, &c. I have no disposition to find obstacles in forms, and am willing now, as heretofore, to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace. I am ready to send a Commission whenever I have reason to suppose it will be received, or to receive a Commission, if the United States Government shall choose to send one. Notwithstanding the rejection of our former offers, I would, if you could promise that a Commission, Minister or other agent would be received, appoint one immediately and renew the effort to enter into a conference, with a view to secure peace to the two countries.

"Yours, &c.,

"JEFFERSON DAVIS"

On January 18th Mr. Lincoln delivered to Mr. Blair the following communication, with the understanding that it should be shown to Mr. Davis:

"WASHINGTON, January 18, 1865.

"F. P. BLAIR, ESQ.:

"Sir,—You having shown me Mr. Davis' letter to you of the 12th instant, you may say to him that I have constantly been, am now, and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he or any other influential person now resisting the national authority may informally send me, with a view of securing peace to the people of our common country.

"Yours, &c.,

"A. LINCOLN."

After having seen the foregoing letter, and after consultation with his Cabinet, Mr. Davis, on the 28th of January appointed Alexander H. Stephens, Robert M. T. Hunter and John A. Campbell as Commissioners to proceed to Washington and hold an informal conference with Mr. Lincoln upon the subject referred to in his letter of the 18th of January, addressed to Mr. Blair. It was intended that the affair should be conducted with the utmost secrecy, but the absence of such prominent officials necessarily attracted attention, and the public soon ascertained that an important movement was on foot. Mr. Stephens at that time was Vice-President, Mr. Hunter was President *pro tempore* of the Senate, and Judge Campbell was Assistant Secretary of War. On January 29th the Commissioners went from Richmond to Petersburg, and on the following day addressed the following communication to General Grant:

"PETERSBURG, VA., January 30, 1865.

"*Lieutenant-General* U. S. GRANT,

"*Commanding Armies of the United States:*

"SIR,—We desire to pass your lines under safe conduct, and to proceed to Washington to hold a conference with President Lincoln upon the subject of the existing war, and with a view of ascertaining upon what terms it may be terminated, in pursuance of the course indicated by him in his letter to Mr. Blair of January 18, 1865, of which we presume you have a copy, and if not, we wish to see you in person, if convenient, and to confer with you on the subject.

"Very respectfully yours,

"ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS,

"J. A. CAMPBELL,

"R. M. T. HUNTER."

In reply, the following was received by the Commissioners at Petersburg, dated at Headquarters Army of the United States, January 31st, 1865, and signed by U. S. Grant, Lieutenant-General:

"GENTLEMEN,—Your communication of yesterday, requesting an interview with myself and a safe conduct to Washington and return, is received. I will instruct the commanding officers of the forces near Petersburg, notifying you at what part of the lines and the time when and where conveyances will be ready for you. Your letter to me has been telegraphed to Washington for instructions. I have no doubt that before you arrive at my headquarters an answer will be received directing me to comply with your request. Should a different reply be received, I promise you a safe and immediate return within your own lines.

"Yours very respectfully,

"U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*"

In the afternoon of the same day, the Commissioners were met at a point previously designated on the Federal line by Lieutenant-Colonel Babcock, with an escort, and conducted to General Grant's headquarters at City Point. They were received by General Grant with marked civility and courtesy, and remained with him two days before they could arrive at an understanding with the authorities at Washington as to the conditions upon which they would be allowed to proceed. On February 1st, Major Thomas T. Eckert, who had been sent with instructions from Mr. Lincoln as to the request of the Commissioners, addressed to them a letter, in which he informed them that if they passed through the United States military lines, it would be understood that they did so for the purpose of an informal conference on the basis of a paper prepared by Mr. Lincoln, a copy of which was placed in their hands. Without going into all the details of the correspondence between the Commissioners and Major Eckert, it is sufficient to state that, on February 1st, he telegraphed to Washington that the reply of the Commissioners was not satisfactory, and that he had notified them that they could not proceed further unless they complied with the conditions expressed in Mr. Lincoln's letter. On February 2d, the following telegram was sent by General Grant to Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War:

"*To Hon.* E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War:*

"Now that the interview between Major Eckert, under his written instructions, and Mr. Stephens and party has ended, I will state confidentially, but not officially to become a matter of record, that I am convinced, upon conversation with Messrs. Stephens and Hunter, that their intentions are good and their desire sincere to restore peace and union. I have not felt myself at liberty to express even views of my own or to account for my reticence. This has placed me in an awkward position, which I could have avoided by not seeing them in the first instance. I fear now their going back without any expression to any one in authority will have a bad influence. At the same time, I recognize the difficulties in the way of receiving these informal Commissioners at this time, and I do not know what to recommend. I am sorry, however, that Mr. Lincoln cannot have an interview with the two named in this dispatch, if not all three now within our lines. Their letter to me was all that the President's instructions contemplated—to secure their safe conduct—if they had used the same language to Captain Eckert. U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*"

As soon as the foregoing telegram was shown to Mr. Lincoln, he telegraphed to General Grant as follows:

"*To Lieutenant-General* GRANT, *City Point, Va.:*

"Say to the gentlemen that I will meet them personally at Fortress Monroe as soon as I can get there. A. LINCOLN."

At the same time he sent to Mr. Seward, who h d already gone to Fortress Monroe, the following telegram:

"*To Hon.* WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Fortress Monroe, Va.:*

"Induced by a dispatch from General Grant, I join you at Fortress Monroe as soon as I can come. A. LINCOLN."

On the morning of February 3d, the Commissioners met President Lincoln and Secretary Seward on board of a steamer anchored in Hampton Roads, near Fortress Monroe. Mr. Stephens and Mr. Lincoln had been acquaintances and friends in former years. They had been in the House of Representatives at the same time, had belonged to the same political party, and as members of the "Congressional Taylor Club," had co-operated in the nomination and election of Zachary Taylor to the Presidency in 1848.

At the beginning of the interview, Mr. Stephens, addressing himself to Mr. Lincoln, made pleasant allusion to their former acquaintance and friendship, to which the latter cordially responded. After mutual inquiries as to former Congressional associates, Mr. Stephens introduced the business of the meeting by inquiring of Mr. Lincoln if there was no way of putting an end to the existing troubles and bringing about a restoration of good feeling and harmony between the different sections of the country. At this point, Mr. Seward interposed and said it was understood that the conference would be informal, that there would be no clerk or secretary, and no record made of anything that was said. The Commissioners having assented to this understanding, Mr. Stephens repeated his inquiry, and in reply Mr. Lincoln said that there was but one way that he knew of, and that was for those who were resisting the laws of the Union to cease that resistance. Mr. Stephens replied in substance that they had been induced to believe there might be some other question, some continental question, that might divert the attention of both parties for a time from the questions involved in the existing strife until the passions on both sides might cool, when they would be in better temper to come to an amicable and proper adjustment, etc. Mr. Lincoln at once understood Mr. Stephens as referring to what Mr. Blair had suggested in his interviews with Mr. Davis. He said it was proper to state at the beginning that whatever Mr. Blair had said was of his own accord, and without the least authority from him; that when Mr. Blair applied for a passport to go to Richmond and desired to present certain views, he had declined to hear them; that he had given the passport, but without any authority whatever to speak for him; that when Mr. Blair returned from Richmond, bringing with him Mr. Davis' letter, he had given the one alluded to in the application of the Commissioners for permission to cross the lines; that he was always willing to hear propositions for peace on the conditions of that letter, and on no other; that the restoration of the Union was a *sine qua non* with him, and hence his instructions that no conference was to be held except upon that basis. After a

short pause in the conversation, Mr. Stephens continued to urge the adoption of the line of policy indicated by Mr. Blair, and claimed that it would most probably result in a restoration of the Union without further bloodshed. Among other things, he said that the principles of the Monroe Doctrine were directly involved in the contest then going on in Mexico; that the Administration at Washington, according to all accounts, was decidedly opposed to the establishment of an empire in Mexico by France, and wished to maintain the right of self-government to all peoples on this continent against the dominion or control of any European power. Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward concurred in the statement that such was the feeling of a majority of the Northern people. "Then," said Mr. Stephens, "could not both parties in our contest come to an understanding and agreement to postpone their present strife by a suspension of hostilities between themselves until this principle is maintained in behalf of Mexico, and might it not, when successfully sustained there, naturally and would it not almost inevitably lead to a peaceful and harmonious solution of their own difficulties? Could any pledge now given make a permanent restoration or reorganization of the Union more probable, or even so probable, as such a result would?" Mr. Lincoln replied with earnestness that he could entertain no proposition for ceasing active military operations which was not based upon a pledge first given for the ultimate restoration of the Union. He had considered the question of an armistice fully, and could not give his consent to any proposition of that sort on the basis suggested. The settlement of existing difficulties was a question of supreme importance, and the only basis on which he would entertain a proposition for a settlement was the recognition and re-establishment of the national authority throughout the land. As the Commissioners had no authority to give any such pledge, the conference seemed to be at an end.

According to an understanding between the Commissioners, before entering into the conference, that if they failed in securing an armistice, they would then endeavor to ascertain

upon what terms the Administration at Washington would be willing to end the war, Judge Campbell inquired in what way the settlement for the restoration of the Union was to be made. He wished to know something of the details. Mr. Seward then said he desired that any answer to Judge Campbell's inquiry might be postponed until the general ideas advanced by Mr. Stephens might be more fully developed. There was a general acquiescence in this suggestion, and Mr. Stephens proceeded to elaborate his views more fully. They were substantially as follows:

That the Monroe Doctrine assumed the position that no European Power should impose governments upon any peoples on this continent against their will; that the principle of the sovereign right of local self-government was peculiarly sacred to the people of the United States, as well as to the people of the Confederate States; that the Emperor of France was at that time attempting to violate this great principle in Mexico; that the suspension of hostilities and allowance of time for the blood of our people on both sides to cool towards each other, would probably lead the public mind to a clearer understanding of those principles which ought to constitute the basis of the settlement of existing difficulties; that the settlement of the Mexican question in this way would necessarily lead to a peaceful settlement of our own; that whenever it should be determined that this right of local self-government is the principle on which all American institutions rest, all the States might reasonably be expected to return, of their own accord, to their former relations to the Union, just as they came together at first by their own consent, and for their mutual interests; that we might become, indeed and in truth, an ocean-bound Federal Republic, under the operation of this continental regulator—the ultimate, absolute sovereignty of each State. He concluded by saying that this Mexican question might afford a very opportune occasion for reaching a proper solution of our own troubles without any further effusion of fraternal blood. Mr. Seward, while admitting that the views presented by Mr. Stephens had something specious about them in theory, argued at considerable

length to show that practically no system of government founded upon them could be successfully worked, and that the Union could never be restored or maintained on that basis. He then inquired of Mr. Stephens as to the details of the plan he had in view for effecting the proposed purpose. Mr. Stephens replied that he had no fixed plan, but there were several which might be suggested. The whole matter might be easily arranged by a military convention, known only to the authorities at Washington and Richmond. This convention could be made to embrace not only a suspension of actual hostilities on all the frontier lines, but also other matters involving the execution of the laws in States having two sets of authorities, one recognized by the Confederate States and the other adhering to the National Government. All these matters of detail might be easily adjusted if they should first determine upon an armistice for that purpose. Mr. Hunter said that there was not unanimity in the South upon the subject of undertaking the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine, and it was not probable that any arrangement could be made by which the Confederates would agree to join in sending any portion of their army into Mexico. In that view his colleagues on the Commission fully concurred. Mr. Lincoln, while admitting that as President, he might properly enter into a military convention for some of the purposes proposed, repeated his determination to do nothing which would suspend military operations, unless it was first agreed that the national authority was to be restored throughout the country. That was the first question to be settled. He could enter into no treaty, convention or stipulation with the Confederate States, jointly or separately, upon that or any other subject but upon the basis first settled, that the Union was to be restored. Any such agreement or stipulation would be a *quasi* recognition of the States then in array against the National Government as a separate power. That he never could do. Judge Campbell then renewed his inquiry as to how restoration was to take place, supposing that the Confederate States were consenting to it. Mr. Lincoln replied: By disbanding their armies and permitting the national authorities to resume

their functions. Mr. Seward then said that Mr. Lincoln could not express himself more clearly or forcibly in reference to that question than he had done in his message to Congress in December, 1864, and proceeded to state its substance from memory. Judge Campbell said that the war had necessarily given rise to questions which ought to be adjusted before a harmonious restoration of former relations could properly be made. He referred to the disbandment of the army, which would require time, and to the Confiscation Acts on both sides, under which property had been sold, the title to which would be affected by the facts existing when the war ended, unless provided for by stipulations. Mr. Seward replied that as to all questions involving rights of property, the courts would determine, and that Congress would no doubt be liberal in making restitution of confiscated property or providing indemnity. Mr. Stephens inquired what would be the status of that portion of the slave population in the Confederate States which had not then become free under the Emancipation Proclamation, or in other words, what effect that Proclamation would have upon the entire black population. Mr. Lincoln said that was a judicial question, and he did not know how the courts would decide it. His own opinion was that as the Proclamation was a *war measure*, and would have effect only from its being an exercise of the war power, as soon as the war ended it would be inoperative for the future. It would be held to apply only to such slaves as had come under its operation while it was in active exercise. That was his individual opinion, but the courts might decide differently. Mr. Seward said there were only about two hundred thousand slaves who up to that time had come under the actual operation of the Proclamation, and who were then in the enjoyment of their freedom under it, so if the war should then cease, the status of much the larger portion of the slaves would be subject to judicial construction. He also called attention to the proposed constitutional amendment, providing for the immediate abolition of slavery throughout the United States. He said that was done as a war measure, and if the war were then to cease it would probably not be adopted by

a sufficient number of States to make it a part of the Constitution. In answer to an inquiry by Mr. Stephens whether the Confederate States would be admitted to representation in Congress if they should abandon the war, Mr. Lincoln said his own individual opinion was that they ought to be, and he thought they would be, but that he could not enter into any stipulation on that subject. Mr. Stephens having urged the importance of coming to some understanding as to the method of procedure in case the Confederate States should entertain the proposition of a return to the Union, Mr. Lincoln repeated that he could not enter into any agreement on that subject with parties in array against the Government.

Mr. Hunter, in illustrating the propriety of the Executive entering into agreements with persons in arms against the rightful public authority, referred to instances of that character between Charles First of England and the people in arms against him. Mr. Lincoln said he did not profess to be posted in history, and would turn Mr. Hunter over to Mr. Seward on all such matters. "All I distinctly recollect," said he, "about the case of Charles First is, that he lost his head in the end."

Mr. Lincoln subsequently discussed fully his Emancipation Proclamation. He said it was not his intention in the beginning to interfere with slavery in the States; that he never would have done it if he had not been compelled by necessity to do it to maintain the Union; that the subject presented many difficult and perplexing questions; that he had hesitated for some time, and had resorted to that measure only when driven to it by public necessity; that he had been in favor of the prohibition by the General Government of the extension of slavery into the Territories, but did not think the Government possessed power over the subject in the States, except as a war measure, and that he had always been in favor of gradual emancipation.

Mr. Seward also spoke at length upon the progress of the anti-slavery sentiment of the country, and said that what he had thought would require forty or fifty years of agitation to accomplish would certainly be attained in a much shorter time.

Other matters relating to the evils of immediate emancipation, especially the sufferings which would necessarily attend the old and infirm, as well as the women and children, were then referred to. These were fully admitted by Mr. Lincoln, but as to them he illustrated his position with an anecdote about the Illinois farmer and his hogs. "An Illinois farmer was congratulating himself with a neighbor upon a great discovery he had made, by which he would economize much time and labor in gathering and taking care of the food crop for his hogs, as well as trouble in looking after and feeding them during the winter."

"What is it?" said the neighbor.

"Why it is," said the farmer, "to plant plenty of potatoes, and when they are mature, without either digging or housing them, turn the hogs in the field and let them get their own food as they want it."

"But," said the neighbor, "how will they do when the winter comes and the ground is hard frozen?"

"Well," said the farmer, "let 'em root."

Mr. Hunter inquired of Mr. Lincoln what, according to his idea, would be the result of the restoration of the Union as to West Virginia. Mr. Lincoln said he could only give his individual opinion, which was that West Virginia would continue to be recognized as a separate State in the Union. Mr. Hunter then very forcibly summed up the conclusions which seemed to him to be logically deducible from the conference. In his judgment, they amounted to nothing as a basis of peace but an unconditional surrender on the part of the Confederate States and their people.

Mr. Seward insisted that no words like unconditional surrender had been used, or any importing or justly implying degradation or humiliation to the people of the Confederate States. He did not think that yielding to the execution of the laws under the Constitution of the United States, with all its guarantees and securities for personal and political rights as they might be declared by the courts, could be properly considered as unconditional submission to conquerors, or as having anything humiliating in it.

After considerable discussion on that point between Mr. Hunter and Mr. Seward, Mr. Lincoln said that, so far as the confiscation acts and other penal acts were concerned, their enforcement would be left entirely to him, and he should exercise the power of the Executive with the utmost liberality. He said he would be willing to be taxed to remunerate the Southern people for their slaves; that he believed the people of the North were as responsible for slavery as the people of the South; that if the war should then cease with the voluntary abolition of slavery by the States, he should be in favor individually of the payment by the Government of a fair indemnity for the loss to the owners; that he believed this feeling was very extensive at the North, but on this subject he said *he could give no assurance and enter into no stipulation.*

The conference, after a session of about four hours, then terminated, and the parties took formal and friendly leave of each other. Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward returned to Washington and Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell went back to City Point under the escort of Colonel Babcock. They there again met General Grant, and he was evidently disappointed that nothing had been accomplished in the effort to bring about a suspension of hostilities.

It is proper to say that the facts herein stated have been gathered from the report of the Commissioners, bearing date February 5, 1865, from the message of Mr. Davis to the Confederate Senate and House of Representatives, communicated on February 6, 1865, from the message of Mr. Lincoln to the United States House of Representatives, sent in answer to a resolution soon after his return from Fortress Monroe, from conversations held with two of the Commissioners, and from the narrative of Mr. Stephens published soon after the termination of the war. The failure of the conference was a great disappointment, not only to the authorities at Richmond, but to the people generally. Mr. Davis in his message to the Confederate Senate and House of Representatives, transmitting the report of the Commissioners, accepted the action of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward as showing

that they refused to enter into negotiations with the Confederate States or any of them separately, or to give to our people any other terms or guarantees than those which the conqueror may grant, or to permit us to have peace on any other basis than our unconditional submission to their rule, coupled with the acceptance of their recent legislation on the subject of the ralations between the white and black populations of each State.

In a public address delivered before a large audience at the African Church in Richmond soon after the return of the Commissioners, he aroused the people to the highest pitch of enthusiasm and incited them to renewed determination to continue the struggle, and stake all upon the issue. His speech was characterized by the boldest and most defiant tone, and was delivered in his loftiest and most captivating style. As a specimen of real oratory, it has never been surpassed, not even by the fiery eloquence of Rienzi, when he stirred the hearts of the Romans to their inmost depths, or by the burning words of Demosthenes, when he moved the Athenians to cry out against Philip. There were other speakers on the occasion referred to, and among them were Gustavus A. Henry, the "Eagle Orator" of Tennessee, then a member of the Senate, and the silver-tongued Judah P. Banjamin, of Louisiana, then Secretary of State. The circumstances under which the meeting was held and the fervid eloquence of the speakers made a profound impression, and those present with one heart and one voice resolved that there was no alternative left but to fight on to the bitter end. The end came within two months, when General Lee and the remnant of his gallant army, having fought to the point of complete exhaustion, furled their banners and laid down their arms at Appomattox.

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